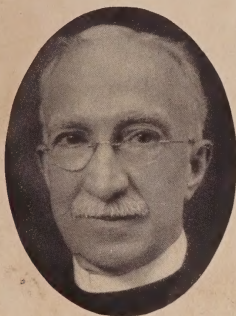


Christ Lutheran Church
Baltimore, Maryland

Rev. Oscar F. Blackwelder, Pastor

Fortieth Anniversary

“Looking Backward
Over Forty Years”



BY

L. M. ZIMMERMAN, D. D.

Founder and Pastor of the Church from
December 1st, 1887 to July 1st, 1925

Pastor Emeritus since 1925

Delivered on Sunday Morning, December 17th, 1927,
in connection with the 40th Anniversary Exercises

LOOKING BACKWARD

"See, and ask for the old paths." Jer. 6:16

If you face the east, you face sunrise and hope; if you face the west, you face sunset and despair. Do not crucify the present between the thieves yesterday and tomorrow.

Such was the philosophy of an ancient age. A philosophy as sound today as it was in the yesteryears.

But in "Looking Backward" in this instance it is not with the saturnine wail of a Jeremiah; rather is it the spiritual weaving of the golden threads of a pleasing retrospect. For age has its compensations not less renowned than youth.

"Looking Backward." What a flood of hallowed memories this thought inspires! The Dream-Bridge of yesterday is but a shadowy transport of the realities of today. The vanished hand and the voice that is still, have their counterpoint in the figurative life-melodies of the present.

And what greater life-melody could there be to you, Christian friends, and to me, on this blessed day than to let our thoughts center on the history of this sacred edifice in which we are assembled to do homage to the Lord God of hosts?

At the outset it might be pertinent to ask why Christ Lutheran Church was organized—what were the aims and purposes?

A consciousness of man's need of God caused the Board of Home Missions, forty years ago, to send forth a young minister to organize this Church.

Here the Good News of God's redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ has been proclaimed. Here also have been gathered men and women and children into the family and fellowship of God. Here has been a refuge for the tempted, a school for the young and old, a home for the weary and heavy laden, where many have found rest unto their souls.

This is why we build churches and when all is completed, we dedicate them, hand them over to God and say: "Now arise, Oh Lord God, into thy resting place."

Thus was Christ Lutheran Church not only named for Christ but it was dedicated to the living God, whom we love and serve.

Having briefly answered the question as to why Christ Church was organized, the next vital question is,

Has It Paid

to organize this church in addition to the many churches that already existed at the time it was started?

In answer to this question, we ask first of all a very great question, namely,

Has It Paid the Citizenship of America

to organize this church?

Churches are builders of the very best kind of citizenship. They help to build a better civilization by a contribution of teaching and service

to the greatest needs of mankind, for a better world through better men and better women.

In this respect Christ Church has not only helped to fashion and mould the lives for good of the many thousands of men, women and children that have gathered during the past forty years within the walls of this edifice, but through their lives and through the lives of still others touched by their lives, the church has exercised an influence for an untold amount of good in helping to build a better civilization.

But, this influence of the church upon the citizenship of America has further been increased through the writings of the founder of the church during the thirty-eight years of his pastorate. Eight hundred and fifty-five public libraries have each had copies of four different books published by the founder of the church, "Yvonne," "Sparks," "Cordelia," "Reminiscences;" also another book of his, "Dot," has been placed into 1300 Sunday School libraries, 850 public libraries and also sent to every Florence Crittenden mission in the whole world. The last book of the minister, entitled "For Love's Sake" was sent to 1887 public libraries throughout the United States.

Of this last mentioned book the New York Post says: "Sound citizenship and the training therefor cannot but be served by such writings."

Added to all this, more than two millions of booklets on social, moral and religious subjects have been distributed throughout the country. 105,000 copies of one booklet alone, entitled "Digging Wells," a booklet calculated

I say yes

to remove prejudice, create brotherly love, and help others to a better and happier life, was mailed to most of the leading officials of America, and large quantities were expressed to six hundred and eleven Academies, Colleges and Universities for distribution among the student body.

When we consider the character of all these writings for a better, cleaner, holier and more helpful life, we ask even the most supercritical person—"Has it paid toward making better citizens in America?" Coming closer home, we ask:

Yes

yes

Has It Paid Baltimore City?

yes

After the retirement of the founder of Christ Church, speaking of his work, one of the Baltimore papers said: "The retirement of Rev. L. M. Zimmerman from active work is a real loss to the city. He toiled in the midst of the crowds. He won the love of his people and they thronged his church. There is no downtown problem when such a man leads the forces of righteousness. For his personal worth and his unselfish devotion to his work high praise is deserved." Another of the city papers said: "Dr. Zimmerman has been one of the stalwarts, always ready to do the hardest work, asking nothing for himself. All Baltimore, without regard to creed or race, joins in the hope that he may be granted strength to continue in his own way to serve God, the country and this community."

Politicians who knew the degrading influence of election days of yore have also stated that

VERY much so,

Christ Church was a blessing, especially to that section of the city where the Church is situated, saying that moral conditions were wonderfully improved almost from the very day Christ Church was organized.

The Church is a Big Asset to Any Community

No church that has been true to its trust can be otherwise than a blessing to a city. And when we think of the large and widely distributed membership of Christ Church, a church down town doing work all around, then must be realized how great and far-reaching is the influence for good of the Church of which we speak. Such a church cannot help but serve a city well.

It is at once a moral spotlight, throwing its effulgent and beneficent rays on the modern Augean stables that are the bane of every American municipality. Not only does it reveal these plague spots on the body politic; it cleanses them morally, spiritually, physically. It serves at once as the open sesame to a newer, a cleaner, a healthier life.

Many of the influential business men of Baltimore were schooled in Christ Church. And, in many of the city organizations and clubs which bring men together in mutual confidence for the health of moral business, and the welfare of the city, are found in goodly numbers members of Christ Church. One of the members of the congregation has twice been elected the honorable Mayor of Baltimore City.

We may also rightly ask in regard to the organization of Christ Church:

Has It Paid the Lutheran Church at Large?

Inasmuch as Christ Church was a mission for only one year and then declared itself self-supporting, very little money was given to the church by way of assistance from the general church Boards.

But, after the first year, Christ Church began to think of others, and thereafter always not only met its apportionment in full, but usually in excess.

The Church has always been interested in all the great needs of the hour, and has given cheerfully in proportion to what it had.

Christ Church has also sent a Missionary to Africa, two young men into the Gospel Ministry of our own denomination and two other ministers, who were formerly members of Christ Church, are today serving in two other denominations.

We believe, therefore, that the church at large will in gratitude say, "Yes, it has paid that Christ Church was organized."

It may also most fittingly be asked:

Has It Paid the Many Happy Homes

that have been established during the past forty years?

As we look over the city of Baltimore, into the suburbs and in other cities, and witness many of the beautiful and happy homes because Christ Church was organized, at which many

first met, became acquainted, then loved and married, we ask, Has It Paid?

Go to these many happy homes, whether palatial or humble and their occupants will tell you whether it has paid.

Has it Paid You Who Are Members of Christ Church for What You Did?

Carefully count up the amount of money, time and service you have given to the Church and your Blessed Lord. With the same accuracy count up the blessings which in turn you have received from the Lord because of the Church.

Balance all, and then conscientiously ask: Has it paid?

Those who have given the Church a fair trial, who have put something into the Church worth while, making faith real by loving service, will answer: Yes, it has paid in large returns for "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

To this end, many of you doubtless can tell of times when you came to the Church with a heavy heart, but left with the burden rolled away; times when you came feeling as if no one cared for you and that life was not worth the living, but you left the services realizing that you were not alone and that you had yet much for which to live.

Ah, yes, you are now so much happier and so much better than when you first became a member of Christ Church. That is, if you have truly been loyal and faithful to the Church.

Has it Paid the Pastor Emeritus

to have served Christ Church for thirty-eight years?

One of the Baltimore papers at the time of his retirement from the active pastorate said: "Dr. Zimmerman has sacrificed all the pleasures that life could have offered him solely for the welfare of his congregation."

And that is true, for he gave the very best of his life to Christ Church, serving until, because of physical infirmities from overwork, it necessitated his withdrawal from the active pastorate.

The physical fragments of his life that were left, God has been pleased to bless for still further use in the Master's vineyard here and there, as opportunity affords, for which he is very grateful. And, if he had it to do over again, he would be glad to do the very same work, in the very same manner, with the very same love that he did it for the period he served the Church.

In "The Book of Maryland" the late Felix Agnus, Editor in chief says: "Dr. Zimmerman is beloved by men and women of every creed. Among his friends he numbers Catholics as well as many Hebrews. When he celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, he received congratulations from Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ryan and Theodore Roosevelt, who was then President of the United States, and from a host of other men in public life."

All these things and many others, occasion the Pastor-Emeritus now much joy and gratitude to Almighty God, that God was pleased to call him into the active ministry and that he was permitted to spend thirty-eight years of that blessed ministry at Christ Lutheran Church.

Yes, a thousand times yes, it has paid the Pastor-Emeritus that Christ Church was organized. Again we ask

Has it Paid the Present Pastor

that Christ Church was organized?

When we think of the army of soldiers of the cross turned over to Rev. Oscar F. Blackwelder upon his election to the pastorate of Christ Church; when we include in that wonderful army of the Lord the Sunday School of more than one thousand children; when we behold the loyalty and devotion of all to their pastor, Church and Lord; when we think of the Church crowded at all of its religious services; when we attempt to comprehend the tremendous inspiration such a work must have upon a pastor; when we contrast all the possibilities with the many who would thank God if they could be the pastor of such a loving people; when we behold the cooperation, the constantly enlarging of the work; when we visit all the departments, the library, the reading room, with the tremendous opportunities for enlargement, progress and good works; when Pastor Blackwelder looks out over the great field white unto the harvest, then must he surely say from the

depths of his heart: "Yes, it has paid to organize Christ Lutheran Church."

But, if the Pastor already feels thus assured, then when once he shall have served the Church as long as his predecessor, when he shall have grown old in years but ever young in spirit as pastor of the church, then we predict without hesitation that at the close of his ministry, he will be more convinced than ever before that it has paid to organize Christ Lutheran Church.

Has it Paid the Redeemed in Heaven?

Get the long list of those who once were faithful worshipers in Christ Church. Get the names of the many dear little children who were baptized in Christ Church as they were dedicated by holy baptism to the Lord. Behold, the array of all these before the throne of God in heaven!

Then go into the homes of the families of those departed loved ones. Sit down and quietly talk with them as at times unwanted tears roll down their cheeks while they yearn for the clasp of a hand that is no more within reach, or a love that no more can be reciprocated. Ask them whether or not it has paid that their sainted loved ones were once in contact and a part with Christ Church. Yes, with tearful eyes they will tell you, it has paid.

And, as we assemble here today to celebrate this fortieth Anniversary of Christ Lutheran Church, as we think of its wonderful past history, its present great work and its future

glorious possibilities, as we thus think of the joy of service and the blessing of such dedicated service, we ask,

Has It Paid?

and we believe you will all say: Yes, it has paid!

We have asked some great questions, but we believe from the first to the last question asked, all will not only agree that it has paid to organize Christ Lutheran Church, but that each one will at the close of this service sing from the heart with a new zeal:

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

Although we have *asked* and hope we have favorably *answered* some difficult questions, nevertheless there is still one more—and that is the greatest of all:

Has It Paid Jesus

that Christ Lutheran Church was organized?

Jesus came into the world as the Savior of mankind.

He died on the cross to make atonement for the sins of the world, that “Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

From the pulpit of Christ Church, Jesus has always been the great theme.

To the question propounded by Him "Whom say ye that I am," the answer has always been clear and definite at Christ Church.

Many today preach the *divinity* of Jesus, but mere divinity makes Jesus only a great and good man.

Deity, however, makes Jesus the God-man, the Divine and eternal Son of God. Upon this Rock-bed, this "tried corner-stone," this "sure foundation," has been built the church we love and serve, and through faith in this Jesus salvation is obtained. "He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath *not* the Son of God hath not life."

Members of Christ Church, therefore, rejoice today as they exultantly exclaim: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord J̄esus Christ."

Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up will draw men unto me." And through this "uplifted Jesus," multitudes have been redeemed at Christ Church.

Not only have they been *saved*, but saved to *serve*, as has been evidenced all these years by the devotion and loyalty of the church members as before men they have lovingly *confessed* Jesus. Thus, they have *witnessed* for Jesus and have been "living epistles" read of men.

If in heaven angels rejoice over even *one* sinner that repenteth, then surely must there be rejoicing in heaven over the multitude of those who have been saved through the agency of Christ Lutheran Church.

Standing up thus for Jesus as loyal soldiers of the cross, marching after Jesus as their Leader, from victory to victory, loving and serving Him as their Savior, we believe that Jesus Himself will say,

"Yes, it has paid *Me* that Christ Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Maryland, was organized."

Brethren, if it has paid all along the line, for the sacrifices made, for services rendered, then as you turn your eyes from the West to the East, facing the sunrise and hope, as you forget the things which are behind and looking forward, you press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling as it is in Christ Jesus, then surely the "joys set before you," should inspire both pastor and people of Christ Church to still greater deeds, deeper dedication of self, and a more liberal devotion, than ever before.

And, "white" indeed, are the "fields unto the harvest." The unrest of America today, the unhappiness which mere material prosperity fails to satisfy, the indifference of many toward things spiritual, the multitude of the masses which have as yet not been reached by the Christian church, all these and many other unfortunate manifestations, offer a strong appeal to the Christian church for an exceptionally strong program for evangelistic work, in which every member of the church of the living God is called upon to bring the best love to God, the best adoration of heart, the best sacrifice of material things, the best life hid in Christ.

Only thus, will the Christian church save *herself* from the challenge of today. Only thus, will the church save the *world*, for which the church stands as the spiritual refuge. Only thus, will the church go forth as a mighty army of God for the overthrow of iniquity and the uplift of fallen humanity.

St. Paul's entreaty, therefore, is as timely today as it was when uttered, namely, "I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

NOTE.—The following official acts were performed during the forty years :

Infant Baptisms	5143
Marriages	3584
Funerals	2617